Fake stamp paper racket

1410. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Pune arrest exposes 9-state 2,000 crore racket" appearing in the "Indian Express", dated 18th June, 2002;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to address various problems and bottlenecks mentioned in the news article regarding deteriorating situation of selling fake stamp paper?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) This is a crime committed under the relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, within the State of Maharashtra. Accordingly, the Government of Maharashtra has taken necessary action. The Police Department of the Government of Maharashtra has conducted raids in Mumbai,, Bhivandi and Pune and seized stocks of counterfeit stamps worth Rs. 2028 crore (approximately). The State Police has also confiscated printing machines and computer peripherals worth Rs. 1 Crore.

(c) The Department concerned of the Government of Maharashtra has reported that various measures have been taken to address the problem. These include alerting the field officers about the use of counterfeit stamps issuing general instructions regarding features for identifying counterfeit stamps, circulating list of suspicious stamp vendors to the Sub-Registrar Offices across the State, and undertaking thorough and detailed scrutiny of the documents registered in the last two years.